culture 21
UCLG Committee

GOOD PRACTICE 2020
TEQUILA
A SUSTAINABLE
AND SMART
CULTURAL TOURIST
DESTINATION

4th INTERNATIONAL AWARD
UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE21

TEQUILA: A SUSTAINABLE AND SMART CULTURAL TOURIST DESTINATION

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DEVELOPMENT, CULTURAL, STRATEGY, SUPPORT, INSTITUTIONAL, GLOBAL, LOCAL, HERITAGE, TRADITION, SUSTAINABILITY, PLANNING, BASIC SERVICES, COOPERATION, GROWTH

1. Context

Tequila is home to only 40,000 people but receives 500,000 tourists every year. The culture of tequila, charros, and mariachi all lead to Tequila and the surrounding region being considered the essence of Mexican identity. Tequila views culture as a priority common good, generating coexistence and opportunity as goods in a transparent, tolerant, and diverse environment. It was one of the first cities in Mexico to adopt a Regional Land Management Plan that conserves and appreciates its cultural heritage.

The project of turning Tequila into a Sustainable and Intelligent Cultural Tourist Destination was due to the fact that: i) tequila evolved from an industrial economy into a tourist one; (ii) tourism was rooted in culture and traditions; (iii) sustainability was the overarching strategy, (iv) the city had to be intelligently managed both with respect to technology and otherwise.

This model is planned to be rolled up by 2040 with milestones in 2030 and 2020.

2. Tequila and culture

The relationship with Agenda 21 for culture is clear:

1. Culture as an integral part of sustainability.

2. Sustainable development must exist at the municipal level.

3. Tourism entails cultural diversity

4. Values and rights as common goods must be expressed in a free and democratic region. Sustainability:economic, social, environmental, and governmental, outlined in its strategy and implemented in projects.

5. Diversity is expressed through the Designation of Origin for tequila, and inscription as a UNESCO Cultural Heritage Site, showing that the territory and its goods shared by society in peace and harmony.

6. Tradition is thus an essential part of experiences.

7. The information and knowledge system is tangible in arts and books.

8. Tequila's Comprehensive Development Council ensures transparency of information and management.

9. The City Council has a cross-cutting management approach, which ensures participation, regional management, the promotion of culture, freedom to express political needs, and the securing of resources.

THE INITIATIVE AIMS TO MAKE THE CITY OF TEQUILA A SUSTAINABLE AND SMART CULTURAL TOURIST DESTINATION BY 2040.

As an international destination, the city adopted the following global benchmark agendas for development: the SDGs, the Emerging and Sustainable Cities initiative from the Inter-American Development Bank (BID), the Global Tourism Organization (OMT), the Department of Tourism Spain (SEGITTUR), and Agenda 21. Comparisons have also been made with international sustainability indices and the city has undertaken projects with NATGEO focused on geotourism issues and Global Reporting Initiative directives. Policies have treated cultural issues as a multilateral system. As a result, national and international alliances have been made related to tourism and culture.

3.Project goals and implementation

3.1. Main and specific objectives

Tequila as a Sustainable and Smart Cultural Tourist Destination by 2040.

Specific Objectives:
• To certify Tequila as a Smart Tourist Destination
• To appreciate traditions in order to create experiences
• To establish a balanced cultural logic based on: economy, environment, education, heritage, diversity, rights, governance, information and knowledge, urban planning and public spaces, as well as equality and inclusion
• To achieve balanced sustainability in the four pillars: social, environmental, economic, and governance.
• To make Tequila a Smart Magical Town.

3.2. Project development

Beneficiary population

The population of Tequila and tourists will benefit from the project. It has generated more than 400 jobs in cultural activities and tourism, and has particularly benefited 14,500 women and 2500 businesses.

Main actions developed

The main actions have been:

1. A cultural policy based on the traditions and identity of the people
2. Creating festivals and exhibitions
3. Incorporation of culture into the destination accompanied by the deployment of infrastructure
4. Alliances with cultural institutions
5. Scheduling of cultural events
6. Creating the School and Academy of Music

Partnerships in the tourism sector between Tequila and Relais Chateau and National Geographic Cultural partnerships include:

a. Federal and Jalisco Departments of Culture
b. INAH
c. Banamex Cultural Development
d. National History Museum and Chapultepec Castle
e. Juilliard
f. Covent Garden of the Royal Opera House
g. Moscow Conservatory and the St. Petersburg Conservatory
h. National Conservatory of Mexico
i. Rosas Morelia Conservatory
j. Coahuila, San Luis Potosí, and Mérida Institutes of Culture
k. MoMa

These partnerships have provided support in the following areas: to carry out the Tequila Music Festivals, museum events, technical consultations, work exchanges, musician residencies, the promotion of Destiny, sponsoring events, and training talent.

Obstacles

The following are the clear obstacles for this initiative: scepticism, difficulty in understanding the concept in terms of its principle, a lack of trained professionals, and stakeholders' lack of understanding about their benefits. These have been mitigated through training, communication, information, documentation, participation, concrete results, economic benefits, and increasingly sophisticated tourism.

THROUGH CONSERVATION AND REVITALIZATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE, THE CITY SEEKS TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES, VISITORS, AND FOR THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ITSELF, WHILE ALSO MINIMIZING NEGATIVE IMPACTS.

Results

The project benefits more than 50,000 residents and 350,000 tourists. Cultural tourism has grown by 200%. In addition, the project results highlight a 23% decrease in poverty and a GDP growth of 160%. Another positive result has been being named as the best Magical Town from 2014 to 2018 by the SECTUR on Culture, Tourism, Social Media Management, and Intelligent Magical Town. The exhibitions in El Centenario "Lazaro Gallardo" Gardens, shops, and in the Juan Beckmann Gallardo Cultural Centre, in addition to the Cuervo-Petrof Piano Competition, among other cultural initiatives are also significant achievements. The city has also demonstrated a clear effort around the conservation and improvement of cultural and environmental heritage, as well as local social and economic development. The project has also deployed 100% connectivity in the historic centre, the Tourist Information System, which generates statistics, forecasts, and simulations. Furthermore, the city also monitors public spaces to analyze densities and movements of people. Finally, the municipality has developed the four APPs.

4. Impact

4.1. Direct impact

Impact on local government

The project has had a significant economic impact due to the following: the arrival of cultural tourists, the participation of residents in cultural activities, cultural exchange, appreciation of traditions, the creation of cultural infrastructure, the institutionalization of cultural policies, and the increase of appreciation for culture as well as cultural promotion.

Today, Tequila is known for its tourism and culture sphere. It has increased the number of its cultural activities and empowered its stakeholders by appreciating and revaluing and improving its cultural events, thereby mobilizing cultural stakeholders in Tequila.

Additionally, there is a genuine level of integration in the population's exercise of rights and gender equality. This is due to the fact that in the culture and tourism spheres, women comprise the majority of workers, cultural work, and management of cultural centres.

4.2. Evaluation

Tequila is in the process of receiving certification as a Smart Tourist Destination by SEGITTUR. This will include establishing UNE 178501, which regulates the Intelligent Tourist Destination Management System Requirements, and UNE 178502 Indicators and tools for smart tourist destinations. The methodology contains:

1. Diagnostic report
2. Characterization of Destiny
3. Action Plan
4. A 400-indicator analysis
5. Evaluation of requirements. The following are the five key pillars: governance, sustainability, accessibility, innovation, and technology.

IT IS ALSO ABOUT MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM FOR CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT, AS WELL AS FOR PROMOTING THE REGION'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

4.3. Key factors

- Principled conceptualization and regional incorporation – organization – rights – innovation – sustainability
- Strategic consistency.
- Theoretical reference frameworks, Agenda 21, SDGs, BID, SEGITTUR, OMT, UNESCO, and Habitat III.
- Destination Plan, and the participation of all stakeholders.
- Long-term commitment of all the interested groups.
- Continued, sustainable public-private investment.
- Tools of governance that help to transcend political issues to focus on a long-term municipal policy.
- Ongoing, certified evaluation.

4.4. Continuity

Becoming a Sustainable and Intelligent Cultural Tourist Destination is a long-term commitment. Tequila has:

1. A Planning and Management Plan for 2040
2. An academic and community-committed system of public-private governance
3. An established network for cooperation
4. Defined benchmark principles
5. Agreements with SECTURJAL, the Tequila Route, Santander, and Google for Education.

The organization of CODIT is comprised of the following:

Government Copresident (Municipal President and a Citizens' Representative); representatives of Hotel Associations, Transportation organizations, Restaurants, Tequila makers, JB Group; local leaders; the Departments of Culture, Tourism, and Innovation of the State of Jalisco; the National Institute of Anthropology and History; the Tequila Route; the directions and rules of culture, tourism, and transit by the City Council

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5. Further information

Tequila was a candidate for the fourth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (November 2019 – May2020). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2020, and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices implemented under Agenda 21 for culture.

This article was written by Federico de Arteaga Vidiella, Director of the JB Group / Tequila Comprehensive Development Council (CODIT), Mexico.

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